Translation Theories
Equivalence-based theories

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Objectives:

- To understand what is ‘**equivalence**’ and compare it with terms such as ‘**adequacy**’, ‘**indeterminacy**’;
- Distinguish between translation as a ‘**process**’ and translation as a ‘**product**’;
- Figure out different **types of equivalence** proposed by different scholars; and
- translate according to **‘translation brief’**

Questions

1) Do we need to be familiar with translation theories in order to translate?
2) How would you study translation theories? What are the main areas?
3) What is equivalence?
4) What is translation as a **product**?
5) What is translation as a **process**?
6) what are the three types of equivalence according to **Jakobson** (1959)?
7) what are the three types of equivalence according to **Farghal** (1994, 2009, 2012)?
8) How would you define **'optimal equivalence'**?

Do we need translation theories in order to translate?

What are the main areas in translation studies?

Historical background

Translation product = equivalence-based theories

Translation process = micro level Vs. macro level

A- Micro level = focusing on the translator, i.e. focusing on the steps and procedures taken by the translator (we can study different approaches)

B- Macro level = focusing on a group of people. It can be classified into three stages:

- **Pre-translation** **=** macro factors / global strategies

- **Translation (micro level) =** procedures/steps + local strategies

- **Post-translation** **=** revising, proofreading, editing, translation quality control ….

What is equivalence?

What is adequacy?

What is optimal equivalence?

What is equivalence?

- Equivalence, by dictionary definition, is **"something that has the same value, importance, size, or meaning as something else"** (Cambridge Learner"s Dictionary 2001: 238).

- **Equal + value = equivalence**
- **Here, one would not hesitate to conclude that the two things are not identical, but rather similar. Such a conclusion is in line with Bassnett (1980/1991/2002) and House (1977/1981/1997).**

- **Bassnett (2002: 36) is of a view that equivalence "should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL versions". In a similar vein, House (1997: 26) comments that equivalence should not be envisaged as "virtually the same thing" since, linguistically speaking, it would be naïve to think of equivalence as a complete identity.**

- Reviewing a considerable number of arguments on translation equivalence, and its nature, types, possibility of achievement in the TL, among others, one would find out that scholars when introducing their views lay stress on certain aspects (cf. Abdul-Roaf 2001; Farghal 2009).

- Some scholars pay extra attention to **cultural** (Casagrande 1954; Larson 1984; House 2000), **situational or sociolinguistic** (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958/1995), **dynamic** (Nida 1964; Popovic 1970), **formal** (Catford 1965), **semiotic** equivalence (Jäger 1975), while others stress **communicative** (Lefevere 1975; Neubert and Shreve 1992; Newmark 1988), **textual** (Van Dijk 1972; Beaugrande de 1980; Beaugrande de and Dressler 1981), **functional** (Kuepper 1977; de Waard and Nida 1986; Bell 1993; Neubert 1994), **ideational** (Farghal 1994), **stylistic** (Al-Najjar 1984; Ghazala 1996; Almanna 2013d), and/or pragmatic equivalence
- (Baker 1992; Emery 2002; Bayar 2007).

Farghal's classification

- Farghal (1994, 2009, 2012) argues that all the above-mentioned views concerning equivalence can be boiled down to a trichotomy, namely '**formal equivalence**', '**functional equivalence**' and '**ideational equivalence**' (2009: 7, 2011: 7-8, 2012: 45-48).

Ex: *He is still cracking the same old jokes despite being* ***at death's door.***

- **Formal equivalent:**

ما زال يردد نكاته القديمة نفسها على الرغم من انه **يقف في باب الموت**.

Back-translation: *He is still repeating his same old jokes although he is standing at death's door.*

- **Functional equivalent:**
- ما زال يردد نكاته القديمة نفسها على الرغم من أن **رجله تتدلى في القبر.**
- Back-translation: *He is still repeating his same old jokes although his foot is dangling into the grave.*

- **Ideational equivalent:**
- ما زال يردد نكاته القديمة نفسها على الرغم **من كبر سنه.**
- Back-translation: *He is still repeating his same old jokes despite his old age.*

Optimal (full) equivalent

- At times, the interfacing languages conceptualize the world experience linguistically in a similar way, giving rise to 'optimal equivalence' in which both formal and functional equivalents coincide (see Baker 1992: 72; Farghal 2012: 47), as in:

- e.g. Birds of a feather flock together.
- إنّ الطيور على أشكالها تقع.
- e.g. Necessity is the mother of invention.
- الحاجة أم الاختراع
- e.g. The end justifies the means.
- الغاية تبرر الوسيلة.

Indeterminacy theory

Translate the following sentence:

قررتُ البارحة أن أشتري روايةً، ولكن لم يكُن لديّ وقتٌ كافٍ، لذا ربما أذهب اليوم إلى المكتبة لشرائها.

Back-translate your translation ...

- As long as there are more than one translation for any source text, and when we back-translate any target text, we will not have the same source text, this leads us to **‘indeterminacy theory’**, proposed by Quine (1960).

Equivalence & Adequacy

- Some scholars, on the other hand, relate the notion of equivalence to adequacy (cf. **Even-Zohar** 1975; **Toury** 1995). For instance, Even-Zohar (1975: 43 quoted in Toury 1995: 56) argues that any translation is considered adequate when it reflects "in the target language the textual relationship of a source text with no breach of its own linguistic system". Building on such an assumption, Toury (ibid: 56) adds that what "determines a translation's adequacy as compared to the source text" is the "adherence to the source norms".
- By contrast, **Reiss** (1983: 301 cited in Al-Taher 2008: 107) clearly discriminates between the two terms. She believes that adequacy is process-oriented, i.e. a relationship between the available strategies and the translation purpose, while equivalence is product-oriented, i.e. a relation between the ST and TT.

Almanna …

However, for Almanna (2014), '**adequacy**' is achieved when translators take into account the translation brief (i.e. the purpose of translation, text type, readership, etc.) before adopting their global strategy (reader-oriented or text-/author-oriented). Then their local strategies (addition, omission, manipulation, etc.) should be in line with their global strategy adopted earlier.

Adequate translation = Translation brief ⟶ global strategy → local strategies

Translation brief and adequacy

- The **translation brief** is as a set of instructions or pieces of information sometimes provided by the translation project manager (such as the medium over which the text will be transmitted and the time and place of text reception) while some other times are supposedly to be driven by translators themselves (such as the function of the text, the purpose of translation, the genre aims and properties and so on).
- When translators take into account the translation brief while adopting their global strategy, and then give full consideration to the global strategy adopted while deciding on the most appropriate local strategy, then the translation is **adequate**.

Is it adequate? If not, what do you suggest?

Translation brief:

Translate the following text to be published in one of the local newspapers:

When I went to school yesterday, it started raining cats and dogs.

عندما ذهبتُ إلى المدرسةِ أمس، بدأت تمطر قططاً وكلاباً.

Is it adequate? If not, what do you suggest?

Translation brief:

Translate the following text to be used by first year students to learn about the denotative meanings of words.

When I went to school yesterday, it started raining cats and dogs.

عندما ذهبتُ إلى المدرسةِ أمس، بدأت تمطر قططاً وكلاباً.

What are the differences between **'formal equivalence'** and **'dynamic equivalence'** according to Nida (1964)?

What are the differences between **'formal correspondent'** and **'textual equivalent'** according to Catford(1964)?

Different types of equivalents

Text-/author-oriented	Reader-oriented
Accurate	Acceptable
The relationship is strong	The relationship is weak
Less freedom	More freedom

- **Nida's** (1964) **Formal Equivalence** Vs **Dynamic Equivalence**
- **Catford's** (1965) **Formal Correspondent** Vs **Textual Equivalent**
- **House's** (1977) **Overt Translation** Vs **Covert Translation**
- **Newmark's** (1981) **Semantic Translation** Vs **Communicative Translation**
- **Gutt's** (1991) **Direct Translation** Vs **Indirect Translation**
- **Venuti's** (1995) **Foreignization** Vs **Domestication**

Text-/author-oriented Vs. reader-oriented

- A **reader-oriented translation** is achieved when translators pay attention to the reader and his/her expectations. Therefore, their translation will be acceptable as they will have more freedom in dealing with the text at hand. The relationship between the source text and the target text will be weak.
- A **text-/author-oriented translation** is achieved when translators give full consideration to the original text or the author. Therefore, their translation will be accurate as they do not have a lot of freedom in dealing with the text. The relationship between the source text and the target text is strong.


The end …
Thanks a lot